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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, May 13, 2016

MAY 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Prescription Pain: Killers

May 13, 2016

America is facing an epidemic of opioid addiction that is sadly killing 78 people every day. Statistically, the chances are greater that you know someone who has been affected by opioid abuse than not. In fact, 1 in 5 Americans have a family member who's suffered from addiction to prescription painkillers.

The harsh reality is that the epidemic has reached every single state and region of our country. The faces of opioid abusers are familiar to us all, they are the high school quarterback, the straight A college student or the mother of 3 next-door. As a result, this week the U.S. House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to combat America's prescription painkiller crisis by targeting programs to improve addiction recovery and substance abuse programs for at risk high schoolers and college students, improve treatment for families, veterans, women, and even pregnant mothers who can pass addiction on to newborns.

When most people think of drug addiction they think of those who abuse drugs found on the street such as crack cocaine or heroin, but the problem today is much greater and much more complex than the class of drugs we have all heard of before. Opioids include prescription pain relievers like hydrocodone, morphine and oxycodone. The reality is that it is this class of drugs; the kind which can be found at home in your medicine cabinet, that is most commonly abused and killing thousands of people. Of the 21.5 million

Americans age 12 or older that had a substance abuse disorder in 2014, 1.9 million had a disorder involving prescription opiate-based painkillers. Deaths from drug overdoses even outpace deaths from motor vehicle accidents; in 2013, 10,000 more people died as a result of drug overdose than a motor vehicle accident. The epidemic is real, and it is here.

Missouri has been impacted drastically by the growing opioid abuse crisis. Sadly, Missouri has the highest rate of opioid use in the Midwest. It is estimated 235,000 Missourians misuse prescription drugs annually. What's even more alarming is that between 2007 and 2012, Missouri had a 124 percent increase in treatment admissions related to prescription drugs and without action, this number will only increase. Opioid abuse does not discriminate in Missouri and does not discriminate in the towns and close knit communities it impacts across the nation. The epidemic is killing Missourians of all backgrounds, ages and colors.

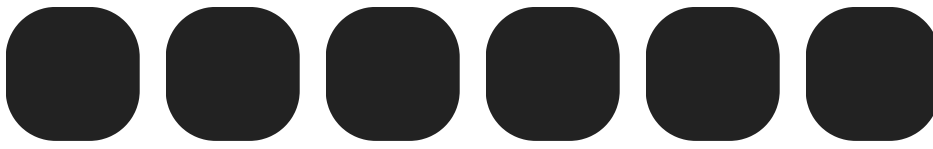
This week, I along with my colleagues in the House, put politics aside and focused on addressing the country's opioid abuse epidemic to save lives across the country. This set of proposed laws includes measures instructing the Attorney General to dedicate more resources to states trying to combat opioid addiction and improving early intervention and treatment for children born with opioids in their system. In addition, we passed bills dedicating further resources for development of drugs to counteract a prescription drug overdose, establishing addiction mitigation programs specifically for veterans, women and teens and supporting law enforcement's efforts to combat drug trafficking.

These efforts mark an important step in the direction of combatting the opioid epidemic that is claiming thousands of lives across this country. It is time that we help victims of this epidemic reclaim and rebuild their lives to ensure that they get a chance to have a bright future and find their own American dream.

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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 15, 2016

APRIL 18TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 15, 2016

Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report A TAXing Week April 15th, 2016

Benjamin Franklin once said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” As the fear of another tax day approaches, these words ring true for most Americans.

Over 150 million people find themselves stressing this week to file their taxes and figure out how much they owe before the April 18th deadline. When faced with an over 70,000 page, 4 million word federal tax code it’s no wonder that the average taxpayer spends over 8 hours and \$120 to have someone else file their individual tax return for them. To put that in perspective that’s close to 1.35 billion man hours and \$20 billion in compliance costs nationwide for all filers - and that’s the cost just to file ones taxes, not even the underlying tax burden!

What it comes down to is that our tax code is just too cumbersome, to confusing and costs you and your family too much. In fact, most Americans need to work 107 days just to be able to earn enough to pay their tax liability for that year. That is over three months of hard-earned wages going directly towards paying your tax bill this year. Americans now spend more to fulfill their annual tax obligations then they do on necessities such as shelter, food and clothing. We need a tax code that is aimed at helping American families,

not hurting them. I believe that you are a better steward and deserve to keep more of your hard earned money than the government and it is one of the exact reasons I fought to get on the House Ways & Means Committee with jurisdiction over all federal tax issues.

You deserve a tax system which is simpler, fairer and flatter. Along with my colleagues on the Ways & Means Committee, I am working on a proposal to collapse the half a dozen tax rates into two simple ones while simultaneously reducing tax rates on families, farmers and small business owners. We owe it to you to make filing your taxes so simple that it can be completed on one sheet of paper, the size of a postcard. The current myriad of deductions, credits, and exemptions only benefits the special interests of a few while ultimately meaning you and your family pay more to make up the short fall.

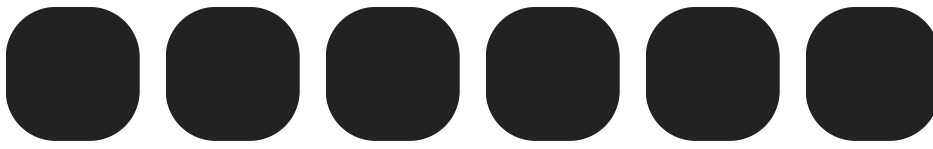
In 1960, 17 of the 20 largest companies in the world were headquartered here in the U.S...today that number sits at 6. Our tax code should promote economic growth, should be of assistance to you and your family and should help bring our economy into the 21st century, not be a deterrent to it. We should want American based companies to stay here, for foreign based companies to relocate here and for small business owners to be rewarded for their risk taking and hiring. We can get there through making our tax code attractive to investors, entrepreneurs and employers. The surest bet to increase wages in this country is to renew demand for the American worker, and we can get there reforming and simplifying our tax code so that America is once again the place businesses want to expand, invest, grow, and hire.

Ever increasing taxes to fulfill an insatiable appetite for Washington spending is no way to garner growth in this country. You deserve a government which rewards your hard work and a tax system which incentivizes success here at home, not one which punishes it. When we tax the fruits of hard work by American families, we punish those doing the most to move our country forward. Let this be the last tax day we fear scrambling for old receipts, payroll stubs and pencil sharpeners by renewing the call to overhaul an outdated and cumbersome tax code, replacing it with one which rewards, incentivizes and stimulates success & growth for you and your family here at home.

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Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, April 8, 2016

APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, April 8, 2016

Hello! We are definitely in the last half of the session. Things are hopping here and everyone is very busy. One of the tools used during the last half of session is to attach legislation to other legislation in the form of amendments. I have begun using this tool with mixed success so far. There were so many bills filed this year that it is impossible for every bill to receive a hearing in committee, in fact, a number of bills have yet to be referred to committee due to the high volume of legislation filed.

I will give a brief update of my filed legislation in the following lines:

My HB 1366 has progressed and is now known as SCS HCS HB 1366 and 1878. All of this is actually Senate Committee Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bills 1366 and 1878—quite a mouth full!! This bill has been voted out of committee in the Senate and is on its way to the Senate floor!! I am quite excited about this progress! This bill will be so good for Missouri and Missourians. There has been absolutely no opposition from any group during this entire process; it is really amazing what happens when everyone works together! The bill has a positive fiscal note which means it will save the state money as well as individual Missourians. I am hopeful that either this bill or the Senate companion which is SB 875 will make it across the finish line this year and be signed into law. We really need the money saving benefits of this legislation.

HB 1368—legislation proposing a committee to study the regulations the Schools for the

Severely Disabled must operate under and then to make recommendations to the General Assembly as well as to our Federal Delegation in Washington DC on how to assist Schools for the Severely Disabled to operate more freely and allow them to really focus on the children's special needs. This legislation received a hearing in the first level of committee this week and will hopefully be voted to the second level of committee next week.

HCS HB 1866—legislation related to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses was placed on the House Floor Calendar for Perfection. I am looking forward to the debate on the floor for this legislation. I am hoping to receive enough votes to send this legislation to the Senate. We have a health care provider shortage in Missouri and this will allow us to take steps towards meeting the health care needs of Missouri.

HB 2546—legislation which will require the Dyslexia Specialist hired by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to begin disseminating information regarding dyslexia to our educators at no charge to the schools or educators. This bill was heard in committee this week and will be hopefully voted to the second level of committee next week.

I am preparing for another meeting with the Department of Health and Senior Services to continue the work being done to update the Certified Nursing Assistant Training Program. CNAs are used greatly in long term care facilities as well as in all health care situations. I want to ensure the CNAs receive the very best training we can give them to prepare them to provide the very best care to our citizens. I will keep you posted as to the outcome of this next meeting. We haven't scheduled a date yet for the meeting, we are both waiting for information to arrive we need for our next discussion.

I am staying in Jefferson City an extra day this week to attend a State Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting. But I will head for home at the conclusion of the meeting!! SICC works to coordinate Early Childhood Outreach and Education Efforts in our state for children with developmental delays and disabilities. I am anxious to attend this meeting and learn more about SICC and the needs in Missouri.

Until Next Week!!
Tila

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APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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“On the Road Again...” April 8th, 2016

To be successful in your job, it is important to set goals for yourself. For me, those goals are best set by interacting with and listening to the needs, obstacles and struggles of the folks in south central and southeast Missouri. District work periods provide me with that unique opportunity to be home for an extended period time and visit with the businesses, farmers and families I am honored to represent.

46 different events, stops in all 30 counties of Missouri’s 8th Congressional district and over 3,100 miles traveled is how I have spent my past two weeks – to put in perspective that is further than driving from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles. The best way to be an effective representative is through hearing first-hand accounts and stories from residents, community leaders, and small business owners of the different struggles they are facing. This is why I held 8 town-hall meet and greets over the last 2 weeks, hosted 2 - first of their kind Veterans Benefits’ Summits, spoke to numerous local leaders, and visited close

to 10 schools.

At one event in Doniphan the line of people wrapped around the block. The community meeting we held there was a great opportunity for me to hear directly from residents about the different issues they are confronting daily and what they care most about. I will carry the messages from that meetings back to the bureaucrats in Washington who have never set foot in south central or southeast Missouri. Turnout like that is exactly why these district work weeks have become some of my favorite opportunities to engage with folks and revisit some of my favorite places.

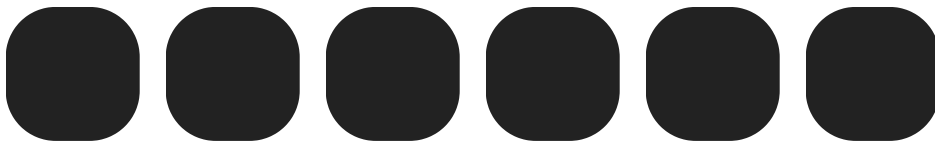
The two Veterans Benefits Summits we hosted were among some of the most rewarding events of the past couple weeks. There are roughly 60,000 veterans in south central and southeast Missouri and assisting those veterans in navigating an often cumbersome and confusing federal process accounts for roughly half of all the casework assistance my office provides each year. These two Summits, hosted in Cape Girardeau and Kennett, were the first of their kind in our district. These Summits were aimed at providing better access and better assistance to the veterans in our area for a variety of issues – making sure our nation’s veterans are taken care of is a very important priority to me and many of the folks in district. The Summits provided a great opportunity for veterans and their families to come to a single location and make contact with all of the federal, state and local agencies and services available to them.

As a 7th generation Missourian, I have a deep passion for serving the folks in the same communities that I grew up. These past two weeks have been a great opportunity to spend time with friends, families and community leaders back home. It will be a difficult plane ride to Washington next week, however seeing so many of the great people in our district over this work period gives me renewed energy to keep fighting for the values, morals and way of life that so many of us enjoy.

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From Tila Hubrecht - Legislative Update Related to Noranda Aluminum

APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

From Tila Hubrecht - Legislative Update Related to Noranda Aluminum

New Madrid, Missouri - This week I had the opportunity to support Southeast Missouri by helping pass House Bill 2689 out of the House of Representatives. HB 2689 would enable the Noranda aluminum smelter to receive a sustainable power rate. It is a critical step to restarting the smelter's pot lines and getting people back to work. Without a competitive and sustainable power rate it is very unlikely the smelter will ever produce another pound of aluminum.

House Bill 2689 now moves on to the Senate and is my hope it will pass this legislation as soon as possible. There are only five weeks remaining in this legislative session and time cannot be wasted. The jobs at the smelter are too important for our region and this opportunity cannot be missed.

Information for Displaced Workers:

Missouri Job Center Programs and Services:

The Missouri Job Centers provide the following programs and services to Dislocated Workers:

- Assessment services to identify your skills, interests and other traits to help guide you to a new career
- Earn a National Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential measuring workplace skills
- Career counseling services to help you explore potential careers, utilize labor market information and identify open jobs that meet your skill sets
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan to assist you in reaching your employment goals
- Job preparation workshops to assist with resume writing, interviewing skills and effective job searching
- Workshops on financial management and starting a small business
- Training and education services that allow you to earn a certificate or work toward a degree
- Work Based Learning programs to either gain valuable work experience or train On-the-Job
- Utilize Job Center equipment to conduct a self directed job search

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Supportive Services may be available to Noranda workers, living out of state, on a limited basis to allow for participation in Career, Individualized or Training services (career counseling, workshops, assessments, or training). Supportive services are not available to individuals participating in self directed services. Eligibility for WIOA Supportive Services is determined on a case by case basis and based on actual need. Allowable Supportive Services include:

- Transportation (mileage reimbursement, car repairs, car payment);
- Child or dependent care;
- Housing (rent, utilities); and

- Tools, uniforms, boots/shoes, clothing or books necessary for training or work.

Eligibility Guidelines for WIOA Supportive Services require:

- Participation in a WIOA Career, Individualized or Training Service;
- Inability to obtain services through any other source, such as faith based organizations, non-profit organizations, government assistance programs, etc; and
- Be able to show how the Supportive Service is necessary to participate in WIOA Individualized or Training services.

Trade Act Program:

The Noranda closure has been certified as a Trade Act eligible event. Trade Act offers the following benefits:

- Training Assistance
 - o Provides up to 130 weeks of full or part time training based on need and Labor Market Information (LMI); or
 - o Up to 130 weeks of Registered Apprenticeship; or
 - o Up to 104 weeks of On-the-Job training based on need and Labor Market Information (LMI).
- Trade Reemployment Allowance (TRA)
 - o Provides benefit similar to Unemployment Insurance (UI) for workers who meet specific criteria. When combined with UI, a worker may receive up to 130 weeks of benefits. Filing deadlines apply.
- Job Search Allowance
 - o Provides a 90% reimbursement of expenses incurred to participate in approved job search activities that are outside the worker's commuting area (commuting area is defined, in Missouri, as 25 miles one-way).
- Relocation Allowance
 - o Provides a 90% reimbursement of moving expenses when suitable employment is obtained outside of the worker's commuting area. Suitable employment is a job that pays at least 80% of the wage rate of the previously held position and is full-time, permanent.
 - o Provides a lump up to \$1,250 for other expenses (deposit on utilities, apartment, etc.)

- Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)
 - o Provides a wage subsidy for workers who are 50 years old or older that pays half the difference in wage between the previously held job and new employment. Maximum benefit is two years or \$10,000.
 - Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)
 - o Provides a 72.5% tax credit for health insurance premiums. This program is administered by the IRS (www.irs.com) and they define which insurance plans are allowable.
- § To be potentially eligible under the Trade Act program, the worker has to be receiving Unemployment Insurance (and be eligible for TRA), TRA, or RTAA.
- § HCTC is on a month to month basis depending on if a UI, TRA, or RTAA payment was drawn.

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